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SECURITY INFORMATION

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY USSR

SUBJECT Alleged Sabotage at the VOLGOTANKER Petroleum Base,
Astrakhan/Offshore Unloading Facilities/New Storage
CisternsPLACE ACQUIRED
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1. "Two cases of alleged sabotage occurred at the VOLGOTANKER petroleum base at the beginning of April 1953 during the unloading of petroleum from a tanker near the port of Astrakhan. A flexible pipeline leading from the tanker to large petroleum cisterns broke twice during the night, and large quantities of petroleum were wasted.
2. "A special commission arrived from Moscow on 7 April and conducted a thorough investigation. The manager of the base, (fnu) Kuchkin, accused Eng (fnu) Molke of committing sabotage. Molke was responsible for assembling the pipeline.
3. "It was only due to this sabotage case and the subsequent investigations that the well-kept secret of the existence of special installations for unloading petroleum from tankers far offshore came to light. These installations, called 'floating harbors', consist of 'ship-rafts', which can be anchored any distance from the shore. A flexible pipeline leads from the rafts to large petroleum cisterns built on the shore. This flexible pipeline consists of separate segments, each about 50 meters long, which are joined together. Thus the pipeline can be shortened or lengthened as will. The alleged sabotage occurred through breaks at the connections.
4. "Six large cisterns for petroleum shipped from the Baku oilfields and elsewhere (not specified) and unloaded in the above way were hastily built between November 1952 and March 1953 at the VOLGOTANKER base. They are built entirely under the ground and have very strong tops of reinforced concrete, four meters thick.
5. "These cisterns are connected by pipelines with small river harbors on the Volga. Thus ships and tankers operating on the Volga can be easily refueled."

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